Report of the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking

SEPTEMBER 14, 2017
Background on the Commission

- The Commission is the result of discussions on **opportunities for better using evidence** to inform decision-making, whether in budget decisions or day-to-day program management.

- Created by legislation **co-sponsored by Speaker Paul Ryan and Senator Patty Murray**, enacted March 30, 2016 (P.L. 114-140).

- Members appointed by the President, Speaker of the House, House Minority Leader, and the Senate Majority and Minority Leaders—1/3 on privacy; 2/3 experts on program administration, data, or research.

- Report submitted to the President and the Congress on **September 7, 2017**.
The Commission’s Process

- The Commission engaged in an **8 month fact-finding process** to gather input:
  - 7 Public Meetings with 49 invited witnesses
  - 3 Public Hearings in DC, Chicago, and San Francisco with 37 witnesses
  - Request for Comments in the *Federal Register* with more than 350 submitted comments
  - CEP Survey of 209 Federal offices
  - More than 40 meetings with other groups

- Following public input, ran a deliberative review process to consider all of the input received and distilled areas of agreement into the Commission’s **22 recommendations**
Major Report Themes

- **Improved Access to Data** -- Laws and policies are not currently optimized to support the use of data across programs or to maximize privacy

- **Stronger Privacy Protections** – Protections today are applied unevenly across government, and not dynamic enough to meet the changing risks associated with the use of data

- **Greater Capacity** – There is a need to fill existing capacity gaps across institutions and engage actors inside and outside government, including by establishing a single entity to better support access and enhance privacy
Recommendation Highlights

**Improved Access to Data** –
- Establish the National Secure Data Service by bringing together existing expertise (2-1, 2-2)
- Address inconsistencies and barriers in law for better use of existing data (2-3, 2-4, 2-5, 2-6, 2-7)
- Streamline the process by which researchers access data (2-8)

**Stronger Privacy Protections** –
- Conduct and disclose comprehensive risk assessments for publicly released de-identified confidential data (3-1)
- Improve protections with better technology and greater coordination (3-2, 3-3)
- Strengthen OMB’s existing guidance on maintaining public trust by codifying SPD1 (3-4)

**Greater Capacity** –
- Align capacity for statistics, evaluation, and policy research within and across departments and tailor administrative processes to make these efforts less costly for government to execute (5-1, 5-2, 5-4, 5-5)
- OMB should coordinate these efforts and consider strategies to prioritize evidence building within OMB (5-3)